

# Anatomy of a Lesson Plan

Curt LaFond, HQ CAP/CPCA clafond@capnhq.gov



## Cadets as Leaders and Commanders Guidance for the Best and Brightest

CAP National Board Meeting • Cadet Programs Seminar

### Heading

- ▶ Answers the basic logistical questions (Who? For how long? What materials are needed?)
- ▶ States what format will be used to deliver the lesson.

### Lesson Objective(s)

- ▶ Student Centered (TOOTLIFEST): The object of this lesson is for each student to . . .
- ▶ Level of Learning: Usually knowledge or comprehension for cognitive objectives.
- ▶ Specific Subject

### Samples of Behavior

- ▶ Specific and measurable evidence that the student has attained the lesson objective.
- ▶ These are the basis of all test questions. In theory, you should be able to create your test items just by looking at the SOBs, regardless of the test mechanism (written exam, skills checklist, practicum, oral exam or questioning, etc.)

### Strategy Statement

- ▶ Detailed description of the overall lesson objective and the steps you will take during the lesson to achieve that objective most efficiently and effectively.
- ▶ For higher headquarters, activity directors, and other managers, this is their opportunity to relate in simple English what the lesson entails, how to proceed, and why to proceed in that manner.

### Attention

- ▶ Describes how you will gain the attention of the students and focus their minds upon the lesson being taught.

### Motivation

- ▶ Provides specific reasons why students need to learn whatever the lesson is about. Answers the "Why does this matter?" question.

### Overview

- ▶ A clear and concise explanation of the lesson objective, the subject matter, and rationale.
- ▶ Also includes "rules of engagement" that explain how the lesson will be conducted and what is expected of students.

Format: Panel discussion  
Duration: 90 minutes  
Moderator: Curt LaFond, HQ CAP / CPCA  
Panelists: Lt Col Ed Phelka CAP; Lt Col Ed Rabassa CAP; Lt Col Don Littlefield CAP; Maj Anne Gibbons CAP; and C/Col Amanda Colleary CAP  
Visual Aids: Tent cards for panelists; PowerPoint slides  
Handouts: Cadet commander's pocket card reference

**Cognitive Objective:** To objective of this lesson is for each student to comprehend the unique responsibilities and challenges of being a cadet commander.

#### Cognitive Samples of Behavior:

1. Explain why cadet commanders need to be innovative and develop a strategic vision for their squadron to succeed.
2. Identify senior members' fundamental expectations of cadet commanders and discuss how a cadet commander can develop a positive working relationship with their squadron commander.
3. Distinguish between the duties of cadet command and subordinate cadet staff positions, and summarize how to lead effectively by using the cadet staff as an instrument.
4. Generalize about the potential conflicts cadet commander may experience with cadets who are friends and siblings; discuss ways to deal with those situations.

**Affective Objective:** The objective of this lesson is for each student to respond positively to the principle that cadet commanders must be mature and responsible individuals.

#### Affective Samples of Behavior:

1. Asks panelist(s) to answer questions about cadet command.
2. Discusses the principle that cadet commanders must be mature and responsible leaders.
3. Assists other cadets at the home unit in understanding the principle that cadet commanders must be mature and responsible leaders.

**Strategy Statement:** This panel discussion will be arranged topically. First I will gain their attention, motivating them to listen actively and participate in the discussion and provide an overview. Then I will begin with a broad lead-off question to allow the panelists to discuss their basic philosophy about cadet command. Next, I will use directed questions to explore four areas relating to cadet command. I have prepared these questions in advance to ensure the seminar fulfills the desired learning objectives, versus relying on the panelists' statements or questions posed by the cadets themselves. First among these

questions is one about vision because before a cadet commander begins to command he or she must articulate a vision for the unit. Second, I will ask the panel to discuss how to work with senior members. This will help the students begin to think conceptually about the inter-personal skills required of command, a facet of cadet command that I will build on during questions three and four. In introducing question three about developing a cadet staff, I will accent the fact that most new cadet commanders will not have experienced executive-level leadership before to help distinguish the challenges of cadet command from subordinate duty assignments. Through question four we will explore the difficulties of leading friends and siblings because that is a challenge most professionals do not encounter, and therefore not much guidance has been provided in texts and by academics. During the second part of the seminar, I will allow cadets to question panelists on other topics important to them. This will ensure each student truly understands the unique responsibilities of cadet command, which is my cognitive objective. During this Q&A, I will note the students' questions and panelists' responses and relate them to the affective objective during my re-motivation and close.

### Introduction

**Attention** 1 - 2 minute video clip to be determined

**Motivation** It's lonely at the top. Listen to our panelists today not only because they have served as cadet commanders already, but because they have reflected on the nature of that position and its challenges. They're going to share with you the wisdom and advice they wish they had had when they were cadet commanders. You need to listen to the conversation and ask questions of your own because someday you're going to experience the demands of cadet command and have to resolve problems that your leadership text has not prepared you for.

#### Overview

##### Today's objectives

1. Comprehend the unique responsibilities and challenges of being a cadet commander.
2. Respond positively to the principle that cadet commanders must be mature and responsible individuals

##### Rules of engagement

1. First half of seminar will be for panelists to respond to moderator's questions. Panelists, please take 1-2 minutes to answer the prepared questions as fully as you can, and feel free to pick up on aspects of the other panelists' responses, but of course please stay on topic.
2. Second half of seminar is for audience to direct questions to the panelists.
3. Audience please limit your comings and goings; be a good listener during the first half of the seminar and we'll ensure your questions are answered during the second half.

##### Introductions

Moderator introduces each panelist and highlights a few of their qualifications.

## Directed Questions

- ▶ Here, the questions are posed to panelists, but they could just as easily be directed to students.
- ▶ Questions are comprehension-level to match the level of learning found in the cognitive objective. "Comprehension level" means that they help students understand the "why" of the subject matter. They use students' reason and experience to see the context in which the material is presented.
- ▶ Comprehension-level questions ask students to paraphrase, explain, describe, justify, predict, summarize, generalize, infer, give new examples, etc.
- ▶ Knowledge-level questions ask students to define, identify, list, name, outline, state, etc.
- ▶ You may also want to list the responses you anticipate students will give. By envisioning their replies to questions, you will be less likely to be caught off guard during the lesson.

## Interim Summaries

- ▶ As you progress through your main points, pause and summarize that material before proceeding to the next main point. By restating the material and briefly outlining it once more, students will retain it better and be able to follow along to the next point.
- ▶ You may also want to write-out your transitions from one main point to the next.

## Summary / Restatement of Objectives

- ▶ Conclude the lesson by reiterating your main points.
- ▶ Also state the lesson objective(s) in everyday language to once again ensure students attain that learning.

## Remotivation

- ▶ This portion of the lesson's conclusion answers the question, "Okay, now what do I do?"
- ▶ Restate the reason(s) why the lesson is relevant to them.
- ▶ Challenge students to go forth and use what they have learned.

## Closure

- ▶ This is the segment of the lesson when the instruction is appropriately ended.
- ▶ Closures are excellent opportunities to share inspiring quotes, witty observations, and leave them smiling.
- ▶ Do not introduce any new concepts with your closing.

### Lead-off Question

Panelists, you've had time to think about the role of cadet commander since you held that position. What do you know now about leadership and cadet command that you wish you had known then?

- Summary of LOQ responses
- Transition to Question #1

### Question #1 Conceiving a strategic vision

Robert F. Kennedy said, "Some men see things as they are and say, 'Why?' I dream of things that never were and say, 'Why not?'" If leadership is about being innovative, pursuing excellence, making the impossible possible -- in short, having vision -- then cadet commanders need to have a strategic vision for their squadron to succeed. What does "strategic vision" mean for cadet commanders?

- Summary of responses
- Transition to Question #2

### Question #2 Working with seniors

Every cadet interacts with senior members, but as cadet commander, relationships with seniors are more intensive. For the first time, your boss is a senior member, not another cadet. Situations may arise that will make you feel sandwiched between the cadet staff and the senior staff. What's the best way to develop a positive relationship with senior members, especially the squadron commander or DCC?

- Summary of responses
- Transition to Question #3

### Question #3 Leading through a staff

Most cadet commanders will have a staff, even if it's a small one. If you're used to leading by doing, then you'll have to get used to leading by directing others. Sometimes your staff will have great ideas, sometimes their ideas will seem nutty; sometimes you'll want things done in a certain way, but you also don't want to micromanage. How can you still lead if you use the cadet staff as your instrument?

- Summary of responses
- Transition to Question #4

### Question #4 Dealing with friends and siblings

There's one environmental factor that almost no military or business leader ever faces, and yet nearly every cadet commander encounters it. How should cadet commanders deal with having their best friend, girlfriend/boyfriend, and siblings under their command?

- Summary of responses
- Transition to Q&A

### Question & Answer Time

- Summary of notable questions asked and responses
- Transition to conclusion

## Conclusion

### Final Summary

Main Point 4: When dealing with cadets who are your friends and siblings ... (summary)

- A.
- B.
- C.

Main Point 1: To conceive of a strategic vision for your squadron ... (summary)

- A.
- B.
- C.

Main Point 2: To develop a positive relationship with senior members ... (summary)

- A.
- B.
- C.

Main Point 3: To lead the squadron by leading your staff ... (summary)

- A.
- B.
- C.

**Restatement of Cognitive and Affective Objectives:** Therefore, from our discussions today, it's clear that there are unique challenges and responsibilities in being a cadet commander. To be a good commander and to become a better leader, cadet commanders must approach their positions as mature and responsible individuals.

**Remotivation** If you become a cadet commander, or if you are one now, translate your imagination into a strategic vision and set goals for your squadron; develop a positive relationship with your seniors, especially the squadron commander; learn to use your staff as your instrument for success, and as you enjoy CAP with your friends, remember there is a time and place for everything.

**Closure** Whether you become cadet commander or not, be a student of leadership.

"Glory lies in the attempt to reach one's goal, and not in reaching it." (Gandhi)